



GENDER AND RESILIENCE: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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Working paper



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Executive summary

This paper presents a synthesis of four case studies documenting strategies towards building gender equality through resilience projects. It draws on the experience of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the implementation of the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) projects: Mercy Corps (Uganda), ActionAid (Myanmar), Concern (Sudan/Chad) and Christian Aid and King's College London (Burkina Faso). The analysis also reflects on discussions held during a writeshop that brought together NGO practitioners, donor representatives and researchers, to examine different approaches to integrate gender and social equality as part of efforts to build communities' resilience to climate change and disasters.

The papers seeks to document how gender inequalities manifest themselves in all four contexts affected by climate change; how gender is conceptualised in project theories of change (ToCs); the operationalisation of objectives to tackle gender inequalities; internal and external obstacles to the implementation of gender-sensitive activities; and drivers that help NGOs transform gender relations and build resilience.

The four case studies describe how disasters and climate change affect gender groups in different ways and also underscore the patriarchal social norms that disproportionately restrict women and girls' equal access to rights and resources. The resulting inequalities are likely to undermine women and girls' resilience, and ultimately that of their households and communities – an assumption that underpins projects' ToCs. Hence, projects that aim to enhance people's resilience capacities have to recognise social diversities, inequalities and their inter-sectionality. If they fail to do so, they

risk further marginalising and undermining the capacities of those who lack access to decision-making or experience discrimination.

Based on lessons from NGOs' experience, and challenges they face in the particular contexts where they operate, this paper aims to inform practitioners on how to draw on promising practices to make resilience projects inclusive and equitable. It also provides a set of recommendations to point out areas where further research is required to increase understanding of resilience to climate extremes and longer-term changes, and to suggest how donors and funding can best support efforts to build communities' resilience.

Introduction

One year into implementation of the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) programme (see Box 1), this paper reflects on progress in linking gender equality and resilience in development projects. It draws on a paper produced in 2015 entitled 'Gender and Resilience', which examined how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) funded under the BRACED programme had integrated a gender dimension into the design of their activities on resilience to climate change and disasters. This follow-up paper builds on four case studies of BRACED projects to reflect further on the realities, challenges and successes of NGOs in the early implementation of their activities. Practitioner organisations wrote the case studies as a reflection on their own gender-sensitive practices. Their experiences are compared in this paper to inform other organisations implementing resilience-based programmes on lessons and on promising practices in mainstreaming gender equality.

Box 1: What is BRACED?

Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED), is a programme funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to help people become more resilient to climate extremes in the Sahel, East Africa and Asia. It started in late 2014 and will run until 2018.

BRACED grants have been awarded to 15 NGO consortia involving local government and civil society organisations, research institutions, UN agencies and the private sector, to improve the integration of disaster risk reduction

(DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) methods into development approaches. These include securing, servicing and promoting trans-border livestock mobility across the Sahel, sharing skills and technology to improve uptake of climate information in Ethiopia and supporting smallholder farmers in Nepal to take advantage of economic opportunities and investments in climate-smart technologies.

BRACED further seeks to build a new approach to knowledge and learning and to influence policies and practices at the local, national and international level. This Knowledge Manager¹ ensures BRACED is contributing to a sustained and transformational impact on people's resilience to climate extremes beyond the communities directly supported by funded projects, by developing and disseminating resilience knowledge. To achieve this, it builds knowledge and evidence of what works to strengthen resilience to climate and disaster extremes; get that knowledge and evidence into use; and amplify knowledge and evidence beyond BRACED's direct spheres of influence.

1 The BRACED Knowledge Manager consortium is led by the Overseas Development Institute and comprises Itad, the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, ENDA Energie, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre and the Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation (University of Nairobi).

A conceptual framework on gender and resilience

Projects are never neutral in the way they are designed or in their social impact, as they reflect, among others things, the implementing organisation's values and priorities. Projects assumed to follow neutral approaches usually fail to address the specific needs of gender groups and the constraints they face, leading to their concerns being overlooked and the potential to increase existing inequalities (Leduc, 2009). Gender responsiveness in projects is therefore essential.

Adopting a gender approach requires projects to recognise social differences, roles, expectations and needs accorded to women and men and between people within these gender categories. This means going beyond the women–men binary to look at the intersection between and interaction of different social identities (e.g. gender, status, ethnicity, class, age, religion, disability). The aim here is to gain a better understanding of the underlying causes of people's vulnerability to climate extremes and longer-term climate change as well as their resilience capacities (Gaillard et al., 2015; Morchain et al., 2015).

In the BRACED paper 'Gender and Resilience' (see Le Masson et al., 2015), the conceptual framework to examine how development projects integrate gender builds on the distinction made by Caroline Moser (1993: 39) between addressing people's practical needs and their strategic needs (or 'strategic interests'). The fundamental difference is that, if practical gender needs are met, the lives of women (or men) will improve without challenging women's subordinate position in society. If strategic interests are met, on the other hand, the existing relationship of unequal power between men and women will transform (March et al., 1999). Therefore,

strategies that further address specific needs and interests help compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women, girls and other marginalised groups from otherwise accessing equal opportunities and enjoying equal rights. Accessing these assets is part of developing women and/or marginalised people's absorptive, anticipatory and adaptive capacities in order to build their resilience to climate change and disasters (see the 3 As framework for resilience in Bahadur et al., 2015). In other words, NGOs that promote gender equity are concerned to foster the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of societies' members as a precondition for, and an indicator of, sustainable people-centred development (UNDP, 2014).

“Projects are never neutral in the way they are designed or in their social impact, as they reflect, among others things, the implementing organisation's values and priorities”

In Le Masson et al. (2015), we looked at BRACED projects proposals and their theories of change (ToCs) to assess the linkages drawn between gender and resilience. In particular, projects differ in the extent to which they:

- Recognise gender-based differences;
- Target gendered needs;
- Intend to produce transformations in gendered power relations;
- Monitor and evaluate gender-related outcomes.

A distinction can be drawn between projects according to their level of ambition, from those that (simply) recognise different needs between men and women through to those that aim to bring about a transformation of unjust power relations.

The paper also examined the challenges facing NGOs according to the ambition laid out in their proposals:

- In terms of project design, the majority of proposals reviewed did not establish the causality between gender empowerment and resilience. In other words, their ToCs did not reflect on mechanisms through which community-level resilience-building might act to strengthen gender equality or how gender equality/women's empowerment might enhance community-level resilience. For a useful synthesis of the linkages between women's empowerment and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses, refer to Stephanie Leder's (2015) literature review for the BRACED project Anukulan, based on two case studies, in the West and Far West of Nepal.
- In terms of the operational feasibility of implementing activities that tackle gender norms, many projects set out objectives that are ambitious over a short project lifetime – from promoting gender power transformations through women's engagement/participation in community institutions to achieving fundamental changes in cultural gender norms. The majority of empowerment activities require intensive and extensive village-level animation outreach, which will be challenging given the scale of operation of the projects.
- In terms of monitoring and evaluation, most of the proposals did not specify the methods and practicalities to measure any changes pertaining to the transformation of gender relations. Projects aim to collect disaggregated data at the household

level but remain unclear on how these data will be analysed and whether they will collect perception data to measure empowerment outcomes.

These challenges are further explored in the present analysis to document progress of BRACED Implementing Partners (IPs) in designing their activities in the early phase of implementation. This paper also aims to bring to the fore the perspectives of practitioners and highlight the realities of the contexts in which they operate.

Methodology: Learning from projects and from case studies

This paper presents a synthesis of four case studies that document the experience of different IPs involved in the implementation of BRACED projects: Mercy Corps (Uganda), ActionAid (Myanmar), Concern (Sudan/Chad) and Christian Aid and Kings College London (Burkina Faso). These four projects, reflected in Table 1, were selected from a portfolio of 15 projects funded by the BRACED programme on the basis of the interest of IPs in engaging in this analysis and to represent the geographical diversity of the BRACED programme, as well as a range of different strategies towards building gender equality through resilience projects.

Table 1: Overview of case study projects

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	PROJECT
Myanmar	The BRACED Alliance led by Plan International Myanmar and includes World Vision Myanmar, the Alliance Coordination Unit, ActionAid Myanmar, BBC Media Action, UN-Habitat and the Myanmar Environment Institute	Improving access to climate risk information to inform community disaster preparedness and adaptation approaches
Uganda/ Kenya	Consortium led by Mercy Corps, with the University of Nairobi, Makerere University, Uganda, Land Alliance, Wajir South Development Association and Technical Assistance to NGOs International	Building resilient governance, markets and social systems
Burkina Faso	Project led by Christian Aid and includes Oxfam Intermón, Meteo Burkina, Internews Europe, Alliance Technique d'Assistance au Développement, Action Contre la Faim, King's College London, Met Office UK and Office de Développement des Eglises Evangéliques	Zaman Lebidi: strengthening resilience to adapt to the effects of climate change
Chad/ Sudan	Concern Worldwide and its partners, the World Agro Forestry Organisation, Tufts University and Al Massar	Improving community resilience through climate-smart agriculture, health and early warning systems

This research used a 'writeshop' method (see Box 2) to develop the case studies and synthesise findings through joint reflection, analysis and editing. All four case studies are based on secondary and primary data, including interviews conducted with key informants from the NGO consortia involved at both headquarters and field level in each of the four countries of intervention. Practitioners and researchers conducted an initial round of analysis, and followed this with a writeshop in London in September 2015 involving both IPs and the BRACED Knowledge Manager. Researchers and field practitioners were invited to jointly write and review the case studies. The participation of gender experts and advisors from other organisations as well as students interested in this topic helped promote learning from peers. Therefore, this paper draws not only on findings from the four case studies but also on knowledge created during the writeshop through discussion and lessons from gender and resilience initiatives beyond the BRACED programme.

Box 2: What is a writeshop?

A writeshop is an intensive, participatory workshop that aims to produce a written output (e.g. case studies or a full report). Participants may include researchers, NGO staff, policy-makers, farmers, students – anyone who has, in one way or another, been involved in the experiences to be documented.

During the writeshop, each participant presents drafts of their paper/section and reviews the work of others, discussing different views and suggesting revisions. The objective is to allow every participant to contribute his or her own knowledge on the topic. A team of facilitators, editors and logistical staff assists these participants.

The writeshop process was pioneered by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and has been adapted by many institutions, including the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. In the context of BRACED, the Knowledge Manager envisages holding two writeshops each year to jointly produce research pieces of publishable quality and to document different dimensions of resilience-building.

Drawing on the four case studies published in parallel to this paper, the following sections look at how gender inequalities manifest themselves in all four contexts affected by climate change; how gender is conceptualised in project ToCs; the operationalisation of objectives to tackle gender inequalities; internal and external obstacles to the implementation of gender-sensitive activities; and drivers that help NGOs transform gender relations and build resilience.

A photograph of a smiling woman with a headband, sitting on the ground. She is surrounded by several woven baskets with different patterns, including a checkered pattern. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

1. DIAGNOSIS: MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES

IMAGE: CECILIA
SCHUBERT

In all four contexts, climate change is expected to exacerbate the risks associated with natural hazards and extreme weather events. In Uganda, droughts and dry spells appear to have worsened, while erratic rains and poor water management cause flooding that destroys young crops and washes away fertile topsoil. Similarly, in the Sahel region, increasingly erratic rainfall and a delayed onset to the rainy season mean rain-fed agricultural farmers are experiencing lower crop yields. Myanmar's dry zone area is prone to extreme weather conditions such as droughts and flash floods, while the densely populated Ayeyarwaddy Delta is particularly vulnerable to periodic cyclones. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis claimed the lives of 84,500 people and affected as many as 2.4 million people (IFRC, 2011).

Weather extremes and climate change adversely affect people according to their exposure but also according to pre-existing vulnerabilities (Wilkinson and Peters, 2015). This section draws on gender analyses and assessments that were carried out in the project inception phases. These help us better understand differences in people's status and the resulting differential impacts of climate shocks, as well as trends of impacts within communities in the four countries of focus.

Box 3: Tools used to carry out gender analyses

For all four projects, a gender analysis was carried out to inform the design of goals and activities. Each consortium used its own method and tools:

1. Mercy Corps developed a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) in Karamoja. Gender-balanced teams of assessors collected data to understand how men, women, girls and boys become vulnerable and/or are able to build their resilience to climate change. Twenty focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with men and women from different age groups and livelihood zones to compare vulnerabilities/capacities. The gender analysis identifies the division of labour, assets, vulnerabilities and capacities, in order to ascertain who has access to and control over resources.
2. Concern carried out contextual analyses, complemented during the BRACED inception phase with a gender analysis, including Concern's Gender Equitable Attitudes Scales and key informant interviews. The Gender Equitable Attitudes Scales tool measures attitudes and behaviours relating to gender equality. The survey is composed of five different scales looking at attitudes (towards women's rights; social and sexual relations at home; girl children; violence against

women; sexual exploitation) and three sets of behaviour statements, referring respectively to relations at home, relationships with children and behaviours associated with domestic violence.

3. In Burkina Faso, the consortium led by Christian Aid developed the BRACED participatory assessments (BRAPAs) – a method for assessing vulnerabilities and capacities to climate-related risks. BRAPAs focus on four themes: gender relations; climate information services; media channels; and resilience. Seventy-five BRAPAs were carried out across the project locations using tools such as climate risk analysis, stakeholder analysis, resource mapping, problem tree analyses, historical timelines and seasonal calendars.
4. In Myanmar, ActionAid relies on 'village books', a bottom-up approach to community development whereby fellows (youth leaders) are trained to mobilise local communities to collect data, analyse their situation and plan for change. The village book includes a vulnerability analysis to assess the links between poverty and vulnerability to shocks and cyclical deprivations and the assets of poor people to cope with these; a women's situation analysis to explore equity, dignity, positioning and denial of women's rights; a power analysis to understand powerlessness, both as a determinant and as a consequence of deprivation; a social analysis to identify processes that cause and perpetuate poverty and social inequality; and an economic analysis to understand livelihoods and related vulnerabilities.

It was critical for BRACED consortia to carry out these situation and needs assessments through applying gender-specific analytical tools, in order to better comprehend the different vulnerabilities

and capacities of gender groups. However, these exercises require time and adequate human resources. Gender-balanced teams of assessors, trained to use gender-sensitive methodologies, are needed to conduct separate discussions with women, men and children, a common practice in all four case studies.

Existing gender inequalities that shape people's vulnerabilities

In all four countries, social and cultural norms discriminate against women and girls in a number of ways:

- Women tend to work longer days than men, but are engaged in lower paid wage employment and segregated in low-value markets (UN, 2015). In West Darfur, for example, women work 12–14 hours, while men work 8 hours during cropping season and only 4–5 hours during the rest of the year (CRS, 2014). In Myanmar, estimated earned annual income in 2007, was \$640 for women but reached \$1,043 for men (ActionAid Myanmar, 2012).
- Women's literacy rates are consistently lower than men's. In West Darfur, women's illiteracy reached 71% in 2008 (Sudan CBS, 2008), which inhibits women's self-confidence and access to information.
- Women and girls are generally excluded from decision-making processes at both household and community levels. In Burkina Faso, less than 50% of the women, interviewed as part of the BRAPA survey, felt they were able to participate in household decision-making, while 27% of respondents said they did not participate at all (Christian Aid, 2015).

- Directly related to women's lower access to decision-making power is their reduced control over their rights, entitlements and resources. In Burkina Faso, the Zaman Lebidi case study flags, women are unable to own land; instead, they must rent land from their husbands or from other landowners. All case studies underscore issues of violence against women and girls. Harmful traditional practices, including early and forced marriage, courtship rape and female genital mutilation/cutting combined with limited access to and control over sexual and reproductive health, impede on women and girls' overall well-being (Michelis, 2016; Opondo et al., 2016).

How the impacts of climate change and disasters exacerbate these inequalities

Based on the existing inequalities between and within gender groups, the four case studies highlight similar gendered impacts of climate-related disasters, which echo the literature on this topic (e.g. Dankelman, 2010; Enarson and Morrow, 1998).

Traditional gender roles that confine women to reproductive tasks, low-yielding agricultural practices and climate vulnerable livelihoods mean their activities are more likely to suffer from climate variabilities. In all four regions, women's lack of control over productive assets, including land, restricts their capacities to cultivate different crops, manage their access to natural resources or diversify their livelihoods.

In Burkina Faso and Myanmar, vulnerability assessments find women's workload increases in times of environmental stress, as does the number of women-headed households. This is challenging for women because, for instance in the dry zone in Myanmar, women-headed households earn a lower average

daily per capita income than men-headed households; they are less likely to own land and the land they do own is significantly smaller in size; they have fewer cattle heads; they receive less irrigation water for crop production; and they have lower capital investment (Kyaw and Routray, 2006). The increase of women-headed households owes partly to men migrating to other regions and to urban areas to seek better livelihoods opportunities. Migration can be induced by conflict (Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar), lack of economic prospects and climate-related shocks and stresses (Peters et al., 2014). In Sudan, men's capacity to work and provide for their households has been challenged by displacement (they are unable to leave camps because of insecurity in the region) and the reduced number of economic opportunities available to them (ibid.). According to World Bank figures for the period 2011–2015, 12% of the male labour force in Sudan is unemployed (World Bank, 2015).

“In all four regions, women's lack of control over productive assets, including land, restricts their capacities to cultivate different crops, manage their access to natural resources or diversify their livelihoods”

Other adverse impacts of climate stress that cross-cut all four case studies include women's increased exposure to violence. In Chad, women and girls face additional safety risks when covering long distances to access natural resources such as water and fuelwood. The assessment in Karamoja, Uganda, revealed that harmful practices, including domestic violence, child marriage, courtship rape and female genital mutilation/cutting, spike during droughts

or prolonged dry spells. In a post-Nargis assessment in Myanmar, respondents mentioned that they noticed an increase in alcohol consumption and domestic violence/harassment, with a perceived increase in violence by 30% comparing before and after Nargis (Women's Protection Technical Working Group, 2010). The same assessment revealed that 30% of respondents believed there had been an increase in the number of women engaging in sex work after the disaster, sometimes in exchange for food or services. In Uganda, the prostitution of women and adolescents as a coping strategy to generate income was mentioned as part of the needs assessment for the Mercy Corps BRACED project.

Other gendered impacts of disasters were revealed in some, but not all, case studies, including:

- Women's higher mortality rate during disasters: in Myanmar during Cyclone Nargis in 2008, more women than men were killed (women account for 61% of death tolls) (Tripartite Core Group, 2008).
- The fact that more girls drop out of school than boys has been reported in Uganda and in Myanmar. After Cyclone Nargis, dropout rates were 34.7% for boys and 42.3% for girls – and boys had more opportunities to obtain a job after dropping out of school (Women's Protection Technical Working Group, 2010). The Mercy Corps-led consortium in Uganda identified adolescent girls and boys as highly vulnerable to and affected by droughts.
- The Uganda study emphasises the effects of men facing a 'masculinity crisis' linked to the loss of livelihoods: Mercy Corps notes that many men are unwilling to engage in agriculture, which they consider 'women's work', while rising levels of idleness, alcoholism and gender-based violence impede on household well-being.

- The assessment in Burkina Faso reveals that women are less likely than men to own a mobile phone, which limits their access to information, particularly climate-related information disseminated through text messages.

Overall, and despite the variety of geographical contexts crossing the four case studies, similar gender-based inequalities resulted in gendered impacts of climate extremes and changes in all four areas of intervention. A set of driving factors will explain these inequalities, including the overall patriarchy dominating governance systems, not just in the Sahel, East Africa and Myanmar but also globally (UN, 2015). Tackling such root causes of inequality between gender groups might be beyond the reach of the BRACED programme. Nonetheless, by paying attention to gendered vulnerabilities and resilience capacities, the inequalities that restrict certain people's access to information, training, resources and/or social protection become clearer (Kabeer and Sweetman, 2015). Furthermore, attention to the root causes of people's vulnerabilities highlights the different scales at which inequalities must be tackled: from supporting women and their family to improve access to and control over assets, to tackling inequalities in institutions operating beyond the household level (Ferrant and Nowacka, 2015; Okali and Naess, 2013).

A woman wearing a white headwrap and a patterned dress is standing in a field, spraying crops with a backpack sprayer. The background is a bright, hazy sky. The image is overlaid with a green tint.

2. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PROJECT DESIGN

IMAGE: MARCOS
VILLALTA, SAVE
THE CHILDREN

All four projects have integrated a gender component in their programming, as requested by DFID.² A closer look at each consortia's overall ToC provides initial insight on the extent to which IPs aim to address the gender dimension of resilience, as well as the underlying assumptions of how social dynamics, power relations, access to resources and capacities interact and shape people's responses to climate change and disasters. The four diagrams below illustrate simplified representations of each project's ToC. The green boxes relate to the integration of gender-specific objectives or components. In the case of the Zaman Lebidi project, the bi-coloured boxes mean the project

² Consortia submitting proposals to DFID were asked to respond to the question: 'How does the project plan to empower women and girls?'.

has revised the outputs with a gender lens, considering gender equality as a cross-cutting issue but not having gender equality as a stand-alone objective.

Figure 1: Mercy Corps, Uganda: Theory of Change

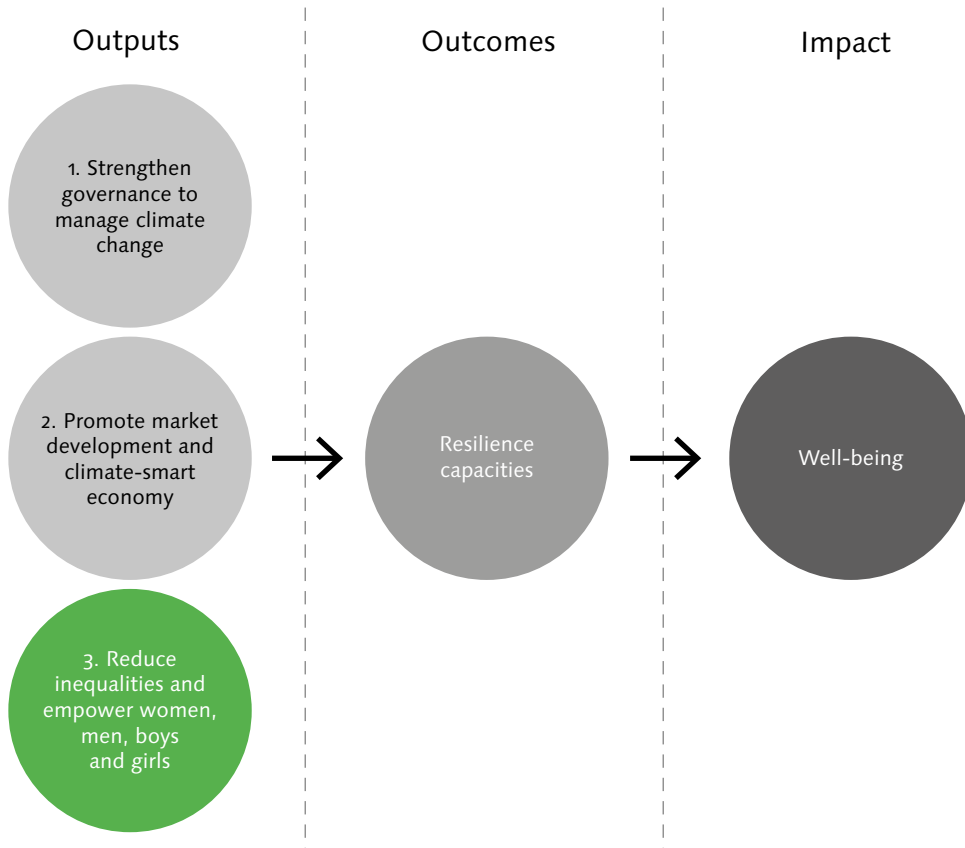


Figure 2: Concern, Sudan/Chad: Theory of Change

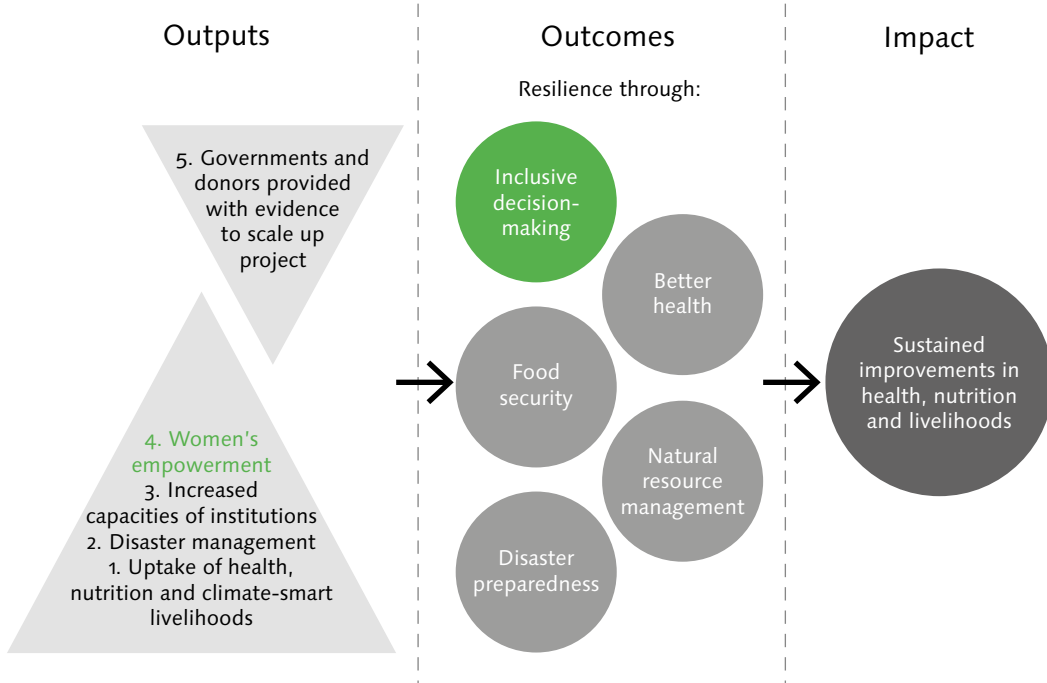


Figure 3: Zaman Lebidi, Burkina Faso: Theory of Change

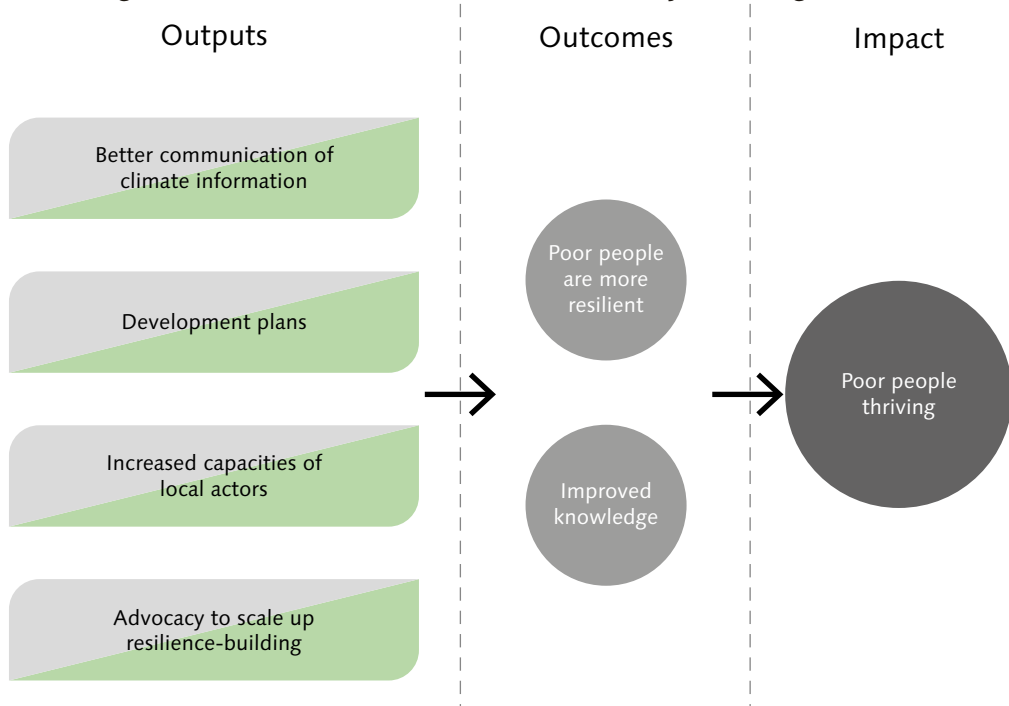
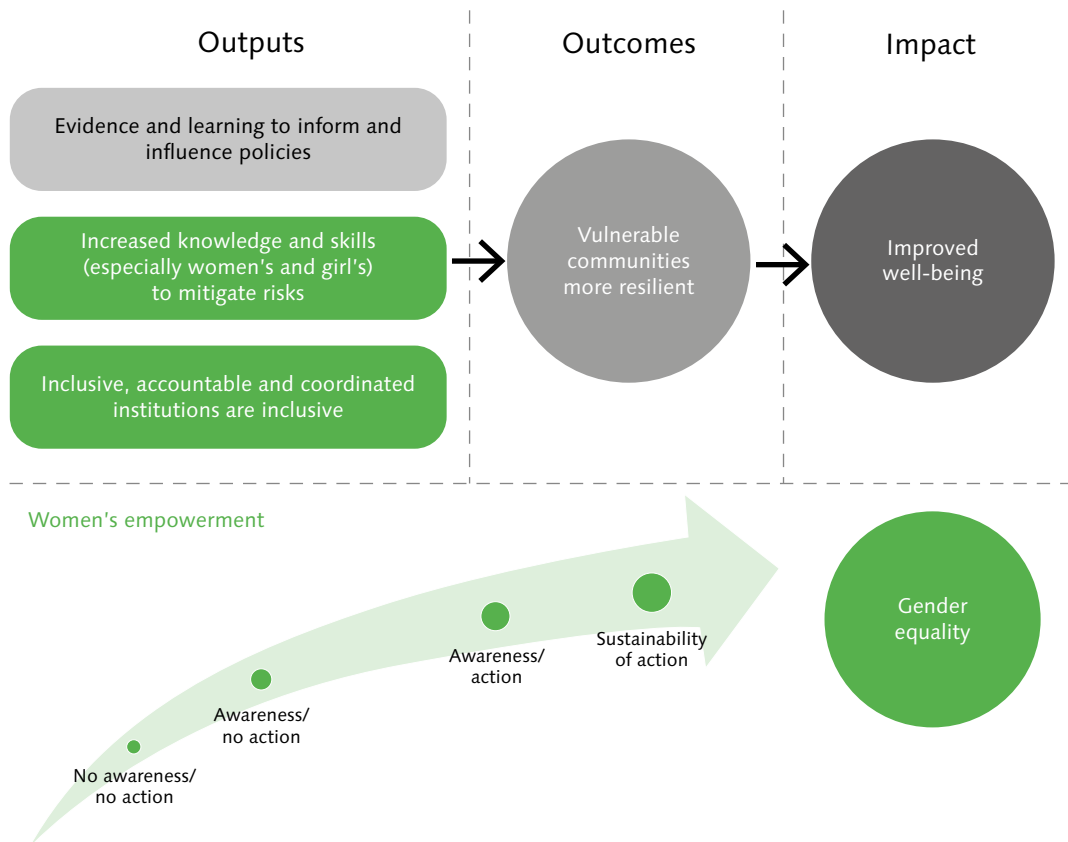


Figure 4: BRACED Alliance, Myanmar: Theory of Change



The Concern, Mercy Corps and Zaman Lebidi projects follow a similar approach, whereby attention to gender considerations is integrated at the output level, while the overarching aim is to develop resilience and, ultimately, people's well-being. The goals of reducing social inequalities, fostering inclusive institutions and increasing the knowledge and skills of local communities, particularly women and girls, are considered means to achieve resilience to disasters and climate change.

The ToC developed by ActionAid for the BRACED Alliance in Myanmar is unique in the sense that not only are gender considerations integrated at the output level but also the project promotes women and girls' empowerment explicitly in order

to achieve gender equality in parallel with resilience. This does not necessarily imply that the other projects do not aim to promote gender equality. The Concern case study actually emphasises that its project aims to achieve both resilience and gender equality, with gender equality seen as one way to foster resilience, although not necessarily an objective in its own right. ActionAid's approach differs from the three other ToCs, as women's empowerment is considered a process that must occur in parallel with enhancing resilience in order to ultimately achieve increased well-being (which cannot be reached without gender equality).

Overall, and based on a spectrum of gender approach (see Figure 1), each project recognises gender differences and associated inequalities. This means all projects reviewed here are gender-aware. Broader social differentiation and intersectionality between gender, age, ethnicity or class are also considered, albeit to a lesser extent. Furthermore, the narrative in the case studies generally moves away from considering women as victims of climate change and disasters to acknowledging structural inequalities (and their drivers) that impede women's capacities to actively build their resilience along with that of their family and community. In this sense, many activities implemented by the BRACED consortia are gender-sensitive because they aim to compensate for gender imbalances to better achieve equality and resilience. When projects aim to achieve gender equality and explicitly promote women's empowerment, they tend to recognise the influence of social norms on people's capacities to build resilience. In other words, when activities aim to tackle harmful norms, this translates into a more transformative agenda. The four projects described in the case studies demonstrate this spectrum of gender approaches: from gender-aware interventions (e.g. Zaman Lebidi) to projects aiming to transform power relations (e.g. the BRACED Alliance in Myanmar).

Figure 5: Spectrum of gender approaches in NGO projects**Gender aware/accommodating**

Projects recognise the economic/social/political roles, rights, entitlements, responsibilities, obligations and power relations socially assigned to men and women but work around existing gender differences and inequalities.

Gender-sensitive

Projects adopt gender-sensitive methodologies (a gender analysis is undertaken, gender-disaggregated data are collected, gender-sensitive indicators are integrated in monitoring and evaluation, etc.) to address gender differences and promote gender equality.

Gender-transformative

Projects facilitated a 'critical examination of gender norms, roles, and relationships; strengthened or created systems that support gender equity; and/or questioned and changed gender norms and dynamics' (Muralidharan et al., 2015: v).

The emphasis that the BRACED Alliance project in Myanmar places on supporting women and girls (as opposed to using a language that encompasses men and boys) is influenced by ActionAid Myanmar, which leads on the gender component of the project. ActionAid implements a needs and rights-driven programme, whereby women's empowerment is a focus area of its work. However, ActionAid's approach is not necessarily one that other partners within its consortium entirely agree with, as it predefines who the most vulnerable groups are. Some practitioners interviewed as part of this study felt the project should target those identified through community-based resilience assessments as being the most marginalised; others argued that they already knew who the most vulnerable groups were on the whole (i.e. women, children). Those advocating for targeting felt projects should build on what NGOs already knew and therefore allocate funding (often limited for supporting women's empowerment) to target those they know are excluded.

Overall, there is clearly an important difference between those organisations that use a more gender-neutral language and approach (e.g. 'supporting women, girls, men and boys') and those that explicitly target specific groups (e.g. supporting women and girls). While the former do not want to assume which groups are discriminated against, the latter do not want to dilute the issue of women's rights (see Box 4).

In two years' time, when the first phase of BRACED comes to an end, it will be possible to examine which of the approaches identified above have been more effective in producing resilience outcomes according to the context of intervention. In particular, the 'transformation' of gender relations may be closely related to the transformations needed in societal conditions that contribute to vulnerabilities and inequalities that are now being prescribed in more radical interpretations of 'resilience' (Tanner et al., 2014). In both cases, the goal is to question norms and dynamics that create and maintain people's vulnerabilities and ultimately create enabling conditions for achieving people's well-being.

Approaches developed as part of BRACED could learn from other programmes that have explored different social identities and the intersection of efforts to make resilience programming more adequate to local communities' needs and perceptions. CARE, for instance, has developed a Framework for Gender Transformative Adaptation in Vietnam, which includes eight components to guide for future gender and resilience programming (Coulier et al., 2015). Lessons from CARE's work that are relevant for BRACED include their focus on increasing women's engagement in climate-resilient livelihood activities by improving not only their access to and control over resources but also their confidence to participate in decision-making. CARE also suggests the implementation of activities is more effective when groups are involved as

'vehicles' of communication, as opposed to simply being considered targets. Similarly, while women-only spaces are necessary to increase women's confidence, more support might be needed for women and other traditionally marginalised people to exercise their voice in the broader community in order to foster changes in social norms (ibid.).

Box 4: Using a feminist approach – the example of ActionAid Myanmar

From the beginning of its engagement with the Knowledge Manager on the gender–resilience nexus, ActionAid Myanmar emphasised the explicit targeting of women and girls, not just as part of the BRACED programme but also throughout its projects. During the writeshop, the ActionAid women's rights advisor and field coordinator explained ActionAid acknowledged itself as a feminist organisation. The rationale behind this approach focuses on tackling inequalities that restrict women's enjoyment of equal rights and opportunities. Since such inequalities are already proven to be primarily detrimental to women, ActionAid considers that the limited resources and funding to building people's resilience should be allocated to supporting marginalised groups.

Such an explicit feminist approach draws on ActionAid's human rights-based values but faces misconceptions among other practitioners and in society. ActionAid participants in the writeshop explained that feminism was viewed as a 'dirty word' to describe women fighting for gaining control over power: *'Even the Burmese word for "feminists" means literally "women fighters". But feminism is also fighting for gender equality, through power analysis, to address issues created by patriarchy.'*

The use of feminism as a concept and an approach to implement development projects sparked a lively debate among participants in the writeshop. Practitioners from other contexts were opposed to using a feminist approach because it would not be well received by the community members and local authorities they work with. According to them, an explicit feminist approach would totally undermine the efforts of NGOs to support women's empowerment because those holding power would perceive it as a threat. Any activities targeting women would therefore face criticism and opposition, partly on the basis that NGOs are trying to impose Western ideas onto local communities' values.

Yet one could argue that the goal of transforming gendered power relations is similar to what feminism stands for. The distinction between different approaches to ultimately achieve the same objective of gender equality appears therefore heuristic. Nevertheless, the debate shows how the use of language and concepts such as feminism might serve activist agendas in certain contexts but reduce practitioners' room for manoeuvre in others. This is particularly the case in societies and in organisations where the domination of women is institutionalised at every level of governance through politics, cultural processes and/or religion (e.g. Buckingham and Kulcur, 2009). In their recent briefing paper, O'Neil and Domingo (2015: 5) argue that, in all patriarchal societies, 'Women who wish to advance gender equality also need to convince potential male allies, make deals and compromises and frame issues in ways that minimise hard opposition.'



3. GENDER-FOCUSED PROJECT ACTIVITIES

IMAGE: CECILIA
SCHUBERT

In all four case studies, projects propose a mix of activities that address both 'practical needs' and 'strategic interests' according to the Moser gender planning framework (see Le Masson et al., 2015). Addressing people's practical needs means improving their condition (i.e. access to basic services and income to improve living standards); and supporting people's strategic interests aims to improve people's position (i.e. challenging the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in societies). As Okali and Naess (2013: 6) stress, however, it is important to consider that women and men 'as members of domestic and other units are likely to have both separate and joint interests'.

Table 2 summarises activities that aim to build resilience with a gender equality perspective as highlighted in the four case studies. Column 1 lists activities geared towards practical needs, column 2 include activities that aim to support strategic interests and column 3 reports tools and activities that have been (will be) developed to support learning on gender approaches to resilience at community and practitioner levels.

“Addressing people's practical needs means improving their condition and supporting people's strategic interests aims to improve people's position”

Table 2: Activities implemented by NGOs to support people's empowerment with a gender perspective

COUNTRY/ BRACED CONSORTIUM	ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS PRACTICAL NEEDS	ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS STRATEGIC INTERESTS	LEARNING TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES
Myanmar/ BRACED Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microfinance targeting women and ethnic minorities • Village saving and loans associations (VSLAs) targeting primarily women, to support asset creation • Raise awareness about protection of livestock, small businesses and diversification of livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ActionAid Myanmar developed guiding gender checklist • Training of community volunteers (65% of whom are women) to facilitate village development plans • Targeted leadership training with awareness-raising sessions for men and boys to challenge gender norms • Building community awareness on child-centred DRR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview panels to monitor women's empowerment • Plan's handbook to do community-based resilience assessments • Consortium set up learning group on women's empowerment • ActionAid's gender and resilience toolkit to create discussions at the community level

Uganda/ Kenya BRACED programme led by Mercy Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in women-oriented markets like poultry and dairy • Establish VSLAs and link them to savings and credit cooperatives focusing on skills-building and training • Support women poultry producers to access drugs at subsidised prices • Support women's barazzas, or networking events, between women, buyers, sellers and service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitise people about women's leadership and political engagement • Support district government to develop Karamoja gender strategy for building resilience (e.g. gender audit of government departments engaged in resilience-building) • Identify gender champions from different occupations and sectors, to initiate a process of change around harmful cultural norms • Behaviour change communication campaign (through radio) • Develop and operationalise sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response plans, through monthly dialogues with community members • Establish male-only platforms to support and redefine emerging forms of masculinity • Establish 'safe spaces' for in- and out-of-school adolescent girls and boys, to improve understanding of and break down gender stereotypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate monthly open forum discussions between local authorities, women's representatives and councillors, to strengthen access to information
Burkina Faso Zaman Lebidi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure climate information is user-led based on women and men's specific climate information needs and uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving women in development of community resilience plans • Support a gender-sensitive assessment of the National Adaptation Programme of Action • Improving women's access to land and climate information, thus helping empower women to make more informed livelihood decisions • Increasing and diversifying women's livelihood opportunities through access to credit or garden farming activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out research to address the knowledge gap on how to build resilience effectively and equitably (two key themes are 'gender' and 'transformation')

Chad/Sudan Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure activities (i.e. improved access to clean water and sanitation and income-generating activities) recognise women and men's different needs, vulnerabilities and capacities • Opportunities and services are made available to all • Vulnerable groups are included in programme implementation and decision-making, including in technology innovation activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage both men and women beneficiaries and encourage individual and collective reflections on benefits of adopting equitable processes to build resilient communities • Existing mother and father care groups to discuss women and men's roles in health and nutrition • Women's homestead gardening and savings and loans groups supported with life skills training, which help women meaningfully participate in household and community decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address attitudes and beliefs among BRACED staff members through training and learning about gender stereotypes • Identify different needs and power dynamics by including women's voices in quantitative and qualitative research through holding separate FGDs, selecting female respondents and recruiting female enumerators
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Despite differences in the approaches of the BRACED Alliance Myanmar and Mercy Corps projects on whether to target just women and girls, in practice they have the common objective of achieving equality and implement similar activities. ActionAid stresses the need to engage men and boys to challenge discriminatory gender norms, although it targets women and girls as primary beneficiaries.

The analysis of the case studies reveals that certain activities aimed at improving people's conditions (e.g. practical needs) are sometimes considered to address people's strategic interests. For instance, the Zaman Lebidi project views the increase of women's livelihood opportunities as a strategy that will improve their position. This might not be the case, however, unless there are other changes to ensure women control the money they are generating and can decide how to spend their incomes. Other strategies appear ambitious and their practical implementation is not specified – such as in 'improving women's access to

land and climate information, thus helping empower them to make more informed decisions regarding their own livelihood activities'. How will the project improve women's access to land in a country where customary law restricts women from owning land even if the legal framework allows them equal access to ownership rights as men (IDRC and FAO, 2008)? Furthermore, the intersection between improved access to land and empowered decision-making is assumed *a priori*, but what other components of resilience-building need to be supported in parallel to foster gender equality?

“Practitioners also questioned how BRACED projects could ensure the development of new livelihood opportunities would not replicate traditional gender roles”

Another point of debate relates to offering women opportunities to engage in income generation opportunities in order to improve their conditions but in activities that reproduce traditional gender roles. For instance, self-help groups that engage women in income-generating activities might help them invest in sewing machines to be able to make and sell handicrafts. This point was debated during the writeshop and echoes the concerns raised by Okali and Naess (2013: 5 and citing Locke, 1999), whereby 'Solutions that build on women's existing work roles, which may be defined by gender inequalities [...] possibly increase rather than reduce risk and vulnerability to climate change by engraining low status, low return work as women's work.'

On the one hand, some of the participants of the writeshop argued that women beneficiaries ask for strategies that will help them generate money out of activities they know how to perform (i.e. sewing). On the other hand, practitioners also questioned how BRACED projects could ensure the development of new livelihood opportunities did not replicate traditional gender roles. For instance, the framework for gender-transformative adaptation developed by CARE in Vietnam (although Vietnam is not covered by the BRACED programme) highlights that one component for building resilient and gender equal communities is to implement livelihood activities that not only improve women's access to credit but also increase their access to information and knowledge about their rights, as well as developing new roles within their community (Coulier et al., 2015).

Finally, Mercy Corps, Concern and ActionAid highlight working with men as necessary to engage better with male groups to address social norms. This also became a recommendation for the rest of the consortium of the Zaman Lebidi project. Mercy Corps stresses that having a male gender officer on staff has proved greatly beneficial, as he has been able to more easily engage with men in the target communities. More broadly, the need to engage with men when promoting gender equality is being undertaken in recognition of the fact that women's lives and livelihoods involve joint activities with their partners, siblings, parents and children. Working with men as well as women underscores NGOs' efforts to foster inclusion and inter-sectionality between activities to build resilience and support people's rights.



4. OBSTACLES IN CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS IN RESILIENCE

IMAGE: CECILIA
SCHUBERT

As mentioned above, a gender-transformative approach aims to critically examine gender norms, roles and relationships within communities involved in BRACED activities; strengthen or create systems that support gender equity when implementing projects; and/or question and change gender norms and dynamics that would otherwise prevent people and the broader community from enhancing their resilience to shocks and stresses.

All four case studies document similar barriers faced by NGO consortia when integrating a gender approach to building resilience. These obstacles echo some of the operational challenges described in the BRACED working paper on gender and resilience (Le Masson et al., 2015), particularly the difficulties in implementing transformative activities that are based on a common understanding of gender equality.

Lack of common approach to gender equality

At the conceptual level, the case studies reveal challenges to developing a common understanding of approaches to resilience and to gender equality within each consortium, between staff and partners. In Burkina Faso, consortium partners currently face differences in their understanding of how the project approaches gender: for some interviewees, the project aims to empower women but for others the gender dimension is important only in ensuring women as well as men can access climate information. Even when a consortium has taken a gender approach right from the start, practitioners still have to deal with the diversity of people's perspectives and understandings within and between organisations. In Myanmar, ActionAid focuses on women and girls and stresses that any activities geared towards enhancing their resilience must address issues of violence. In contrast, other members of their consortium believe men will be excluded if the organisation focuses on women's empowerment.

Resistance to adopting gender approaches

More broadly, many practitioners lack understanding of the linkages between gender and disaster risk management (ISDR, 2009) and between gender and CCA activities (Le Masson, 2013). The case study from Myanmar points out that emergency operations often neglect to incorporate attention to gender issues, an observation shared by participants in the writeshop and documented in previous studies (Huairou Commission, 2010; Le Masson et al., 2016). For Mercy Corps, the concept of resilience is complex, and communicating both internally and externally the connections between resilience

and gender inequality is challenging. Therefore, its consortium aims to focus on increasing learning on the intersection between resilience and gender equality. At the implementation level, the lack of understanding of gender approaches combined with reluctance to adopt a gender lens means organisations are not clear how to integrate attention to gender in their activities in a meaningful way. This begins with NGO staff members' own attitudes and resistance. Concern highlights that the recent Gender Equitable Attitudes survey conducted among 126 staff (79% men, 21% women) in Concern Sudan revealed that 50% of staff believed a man should have the final word about all decisions in his home and 47% of male respondents in West Darfur reported having, alone, the final say on the health of women in their family (Michelis, 2016).

The Zaman Lebidi case study stresses that the development of a single coherent approach to gender in the project is made more difficult by the high turnover of staff. This is even more challenging when no budget is allocated specifically to carrying out gender-oriented activities or investigating the differentiated impact of the Zaman Lebidi project on women and men.

Resistance to challenge power relations

Interventions geared towards tackling harmful social norms and fostering social inequalities are likely to face resistance from local communities and authorities, a challenge all participants of the writeshop highlighted. As emphasised in the Myanmar case study, 'to promote women's empowerment means to increase people's awareness of their rights. This encourages them to raise their voices about their needs, their concerns and their aspirations and this could therefore create social tensions between those

who hold power and those who advocate a more equal share of power' (Hilton et al., 2016). Even when NGOs recognise the importance of transforming unequal power relations that create gender-differentiated vulnerabilities, practitioners are careful not to upset political sensitivities or to go explicitly against official discourses. Some organisations have decided not to shy away from their mandate to support the most excluded groups (e.g. ActionAid). Others are more reluctant to explicitly address social norms, particularly in conservative contexts where they risk compromising their relationships with communities and local actors. This is highly problematic for resilience projects that aim to transform social relations (e.g. tackling gender-based violence).

“Even when policies to promote gender equality exist in the countries where NGOs are working, the translation of legal frameworks into practice is not always happening”

Limited timeframe

The challenge of tackling harmful social and cultural norms that inhibit people's capacities to deal with climate change extremes and longer-term trends is directly linked to the issue of timeframes. Participants in the writeshop questioned what could realistically be achieved within the timeframe of BRACED (three years) in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. In the Zaman Lebidi project, gender focal points have only a limited amount of time dedicated to the project and believe there is a mismatch between the DFID requirement to support women's empowerment and the very short timeframe.

Similarly, the Mercy Corps case study highlights that the transformation of entrenched patriarchy, held in place by a male-dominated elite of elders, opinion leaders and government officials, is unlikely to take place within three years. Shifting sociocultural beliefs, attitudes, norms and practices with people whose interest is to maintain the *status quo* requires long-term engagement (Opondo et al., 2015). This engagement could also be constrained by the political instability, insecurity and frequent crises characterising contexts where NGOs operate and highlighted by practitioners as obstacles to the effectiveness of gender-transformative interventions. This contradicts, however, findings that social ruptures or large-scale conflicts can also catalyse shifts in gender relations (O'Neil and Domingo, 2015). Conflicts can disrupt traditional gender roles while peace processes (including political reforms or the writing-up of a new constitution) can also create opportunities for women to renegotiate their share of rights and resources (ibid.).

Constrained resources

Even when policies to promote gender equality exist in the countries where NGOs are working, the translation of legal frameworks into practice is not always happening. Mercy Corps highlights that, even though gender equality is an official priority for the government in Uganda, implementation of existing policies has been weak. One reason underscored by the Uganda case study is that the government-assigned district gender focal points are overworked, constrained by limited resources and unable to perform a coordination function. In order to overcome time and human limited resources, Mercy Corps' strategy to initiate social change is to secure the buy-in of community leaders who can ensure the process of gender transformation continues after the programme ends. During the writeshop,

participants also discussed whether time limitations were enough of a reason to justify not addressing social norms with a long-term goal in mind, even if the outcomes might not be measured by the end of BRACED. This points out the need for the monitoring and evaluation strategy to recognise that transformation and/or resilience might not be meaningfully captured within three years.

Despite all the difficulties and caveats presented above, the Concern case study felt shifts in attitudes and potential visible trends could be measured during the lifetime of the project. Similarly, ActionAid plans to monitor changes in attitudes through interview panels with key informants in beneficiary communities. However, whether such shifts lead to sustainable changes in behaviour towards equality and resilience is a question that is unlikely to be answered within three years. Considerable attention needs to be paid to evaluating changes pertaining to gender relations. One option is to monitor any trends and shifts in attitudes occurring during the BRACED programme (as many IPs aim to do) and also to plan to evaluate progress at a later stage, a few years after the project is complete.



5. DRIVERS OF GENDER TRANSFORMATION

IMAGE: MALINI
MORZARIA/EU/
ECHO

Despite the barriers NGO consortia face, the four case studies presented here highlight a number of drivers of increased attention being paid to gender equality in resilience based-projects.

At the international level, donor commitment to supporting the resilience of women and girls is key. Without the DFID requirement for NGOs to demonstrate how they would empower women in their proposals, the BRACED Alliance in Myanmar might have taken a more gender-neutral approach. Discussions with some of the Alliance members suggest they might have implemented activities targeting the most vulnerable groups identified by risk and resilience assessments, rather than supporting women and girls *de facto*. The work of the Knowledge Manager under BRACED also supports gender and social equality

as a learning theme, through the generation of new evidence, the integration of gender into programme-wide monitoring and evaluation and learning activities such as the writeshop in London.

At the national level, collaboration with other organisations working on similar themes and present in the country (UN agencies, NGOs and community-based organisations and networks) is considered a driver for IPs to promote change while avoiding duplication. Moreover, the existence of legal and policy frameworks on gender equality at both national and subnational levels helps create an enabling gender-supportive environment. In Uganda, the government has enacted policies that encourage the participation of women in politics (including a 30% reserved seating system for elected officials, a women's council and gender focal points at district level). This provides a powerful incentive for government officials to collaborate on the development of a sub-regional gender strategy and to operationalise and resource the plan (Opondo et al., 2015). However, and as noted before, the existing of such policies does not mean they are adhered to and implemented in practice.

At the organisational level, a combination of rules and incentives structure opportunities to better mainstream attention to gender equality within organisations. The case studies found that:

1. The commitment of senior management in country to ensure gender equality is a priority. With senior management commitment, staff on the ground can receive the necessary support to implement gender-related activities, such as in Mercy Corps, Concern and the BRACED Alliance in Myanmar.
2. Policies and guidelines on gender equality within the organisation that are effective and adhered to help institutionalise gender equality. Senior Concern

staff often refer to internal policies and approaches, such as 'How Concern Understands Extreme Poverty', recognising the impact of inequality on extreme poverty and the need to address all its dimensions (inequality, risk and vulnerability).

“The existence of legal and policy frameworks on gender equality at both national and subnational levels helps create an enabling gender-supportive environment”

3. The embeddedness of gender equality in a project's ToC and methods also helps create accountability, as NGOs have to report against gender-related indicators. Whether such indicators will meaningfully capture any social transformation is another question: this calls for conducting qualitative research to complement any analysis in more depth. The case study of the Zaman Lebidi project recognises that a clear and coherent approach to gender and resilience should be co-developed by partners, put into writing from the start of the project and carefully explained and shared among all levels of staff and across all partners.
4. All consortia draw on existing inclusive practices that aim to reduce social inequalities. Women's empowerment is already a standalone objective of the ActionAid country programme in Myanmar (beyond BRACED), while Concern aims to improve the gender balance within the team, encourage women applicants and offer staff development opportunities to female staff.

5. A key driver stressed in all four case studies is the expertise of individuals within organisations who work specifically on implementing gender-sensitive activities and driving the women's empowerment objective. In Concern, a dedicated equality advisor for the BRACED project provides technical support. In Myanmar, ActionAid, identified as a lead agency on gender mainstreaming for the BRACED Alliance, provides mentorship for each partner on activity design and implementation. In Mercy Corps, the team comprises a regional gender advisor and staff members who are competent on gender approaches. Within Zaman Lebidi, gender focal points in Christian Aid, Action Contre la Faim and Oxfam Intermón are tasked with embedding gender-sensitive policies and activities in the project design and implementation, although they have limited time.
6. With the above factors in place, it becomes easier to rely on staff's increased awareness, understanding of gender approaches and knowledge of gender mainstreaming tools. Concern has a capacity-building and self-reflection programme on gender, which combines classical training approaches with dialogues and experiential activities. ActionAid Myanmar has held two gender and leadership trainings for partner staff. King's College London (part of the Zaman Lebidi consortium) has hired a gender consultant to support gender-related learning activities in the project and the planning of a Gender in Resilience Programming workshop.



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

IMAGE: MALINI
MORZARIA/EU/
ECHO

The four case studies of gender mainstreaming in resilience projects presented in this paper describe how disasters and climate change affect gender groups in different ways and also underscore the patriarchal social norms that disproportionately restrict women and girls' equal access to rights and resources. The resulting inequalities are likely to undermine women and girls' resilience, and ultimately that of their households and communities – an assumption that underpins project ToCs.

Projects that aim to enhance people's resilience capacities have to recognise social diversities, inequalities and their intersectionality. If they fail to do so, they may not address the different needs and vulnerabilities of the people they aim to support. They also risk further marginalising and undermining

the capacities of those who lack access to decision-making or experience discrimination, hence reinforcing inequalities between dominant and minority groups (see recent evidence from the *Gender and Development* special issue on resilience (Smyth and Sweetman, 2015)).

Presented below is a set of recommendations that build on the case study findings and the analysis presented in this paper. Recommendations are divided into those of relevance for the BRACED Knowledge Manager and others interested in conducting action research related to projects, with the dual aim of building community resilience and empowering women; those for NGOs; and those for donors funding these kinds of programmes.

Recommendations to Implementing Partners

IPs can draw on the existing expertise of their own consortium members, as well as sharing lessons and best practices with other consortia, as was done during the writeshop (the BRACED website and internal learning lounge also offer a platform to exchange ideas). In addition to this:

- At a minimum, BRACED consortia should ensure their projects do not perpetuate and reinforce social inequalities within organisations and in the communities they work with. Ideally, IPs should consider using a gender-sensitive approach to make sure they address the needs of different groups equitably.
- IPs wanting to adjust their programmes to better address gender equality may draw on promising strategies developed in other consortia and documented in this paper

(e.g. developing a gender checklist, integrating an objective on gender equality in the consortium's ToC, revising the budget to allocate more resources to gender focal points).

- To facilitate the mainstreaming of gender equality in BRACED activities, training conducted with all staff members and partners can help challenge assumptions and build practitioners' capacities on inclusive practices.
- To continue implementing the shift from considering women as victims to working with them as equal agents of transformational change, IPs should draw on existing tools that are available online. For example:
 - [Oxfam's Learning Companion](#) to provide programme staff with the basis for incorporating gender analysis and women's rights into DRR and CCA programming;
 - The [Making It Count](#) Guide, produced by CARE International in Vietnam, UN Women in Viet Nam and German development cooperation, offers practical actions, tools and resources for integrating gender into climate change and DRR interventions. It is designed to be an easily accessible entry point for practitioners.
- To increase understanding of people's vulnerabilities and capacities to cope with climate extremes and longer-term changes, IPs should conduct/facilitate the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data. This will support a more in-depth analysis of best resilience strategies.
- To build advocacy efforts for gender equality into sustainable plans after the end of the BRACED programme, IPs must engage in and strengthen partnerships with local organisations. This means applying the principle of inclusivity not only with beneficiaries but also with local community-based

and civil society organisations with gender expertise and/or willingness to work on gender in the context of resilience to climate extremes and changes. Examples of strategies such as securing land titles for women or promoting grassroots-led transfer of resilient practices can be found in reports from the Huairou Commission.

Recommendations to the BRACED Knowledge Manager

The four case studies point out areas where more research is needed on the linkages between gender equality and resilience:

- Mercy Corps, Concern and ActionAid Myanmar emphasise the need to research the impact of gender-based violence on resilience-building interventions and, conversely, how resilience programmes can better tackle harmful social norms such as gender-based violence.
- Concern highlights the need to further investigate gender relations in pastoralist lifestyles and nomadic communities, and how these interact with a changing climate. This would bring examples of adaption strategies and highlight overlooked impacts of climate change on these particular groups.
- ActionAid Myanmar stresses the need to conduct robust gender budgeting research and advocacy to strengthen gender-responsive public service delivery that supports women's resilience.
- More research is needed to examine and plan how to practically assess progress towards gender equality and women's participation in risk management and adaptation

decision-making over the longer term. In particular, better metrics are needed to measure and link shifts in attitudes to changes in behaviour that lead to sustainable impacts on peoples' resilience.

- Critically, a comparison of monitoring and evaluation data for BRACED projects will allow practitioners to better understand the critical components and entry points for resilience projects to add value/strengthen gender equality. Conversely, research will also be able to assess how a gender-transformative approach can help achieve better resilience outcomes.

Recommendations to donors

The BRACED programme requires NGO consortia to support women and girls' empowerment, but remains fairly open in terms of what gender approaches NGOs are supposed to follow. This flexibility allows BRACED consortia to design and implement activities that draw on the conceptual thinking and practical experience of their members on gender-related issues. While this works well for consortia that benefit from strong internal expertise and the commitment of senior management to gender equality, other NGOs may struggle to make sense of promoting gender equality as part of resilience-building. Hence, when calling for the submission of project proposals, applicants would benefit from guidance regarding the gender equality approach promoted by the donor. For instance, referring to policies and guidelines such as [DFID's Gender Manual](#), would help NGOs develop project proposals that mainstream attention to gender at all levels, from reflecting on their internal organisation functioning (recruitment practices, capacity-building opportunities) to designing a ToC and related activities that promote inclusion, equality of opportunities and equity of outcomes (DFID, 2008).

In relation to this, donors' funds must support internal processes that improve gender mainstreaming at organisational level. This means allowing funding to be used for capacity-building on gender equality first, before (or in parallel with) project implementation in order to support changes within NGO staff perceptions and approaches.

Another key message concerns the tension between promoting a transformation of gender relations (which is a long-term process) and donor requirements to measure the outcomes of short-term interventions. In order to evaluate changes in behaviour and transformations in gender relations, resources will need to be allocated to conducting evaluations after projects have been completed. This also requires donors, NGOs and their monitoring and evaluation strategy to engage with local stakeholders in the long term to ensure transformations of social relations are effective, sustainable and positive for people's resilience and well-being.

One of the best lessons from the writeshop was the realisation that resilience programming improves when sharing knowledge and experience between practitioners with first-hand experience of the contexts where they operate, researchers and donors' representatives. Through confronting and compiling the perspectives of all stakeholders engaged in BRACED, the resulting recommendations above aim to support the efforts of BRACED to build communities' resilience with attention to different contexts. It is our shared responsibility to take these recommendations forward not just for the sake of successful resilience programming but also, more importantly, for achieving wider social equality and development progress.

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BRACED aims to build the resilience of more than 5 million vulnerable people against climate extremes and disasters. It does so through a three year, UK Government funded programme, which supports 108 organisations, working in 15 consortiums, across 13 countries in East Africa, the Sahel and Southeast Asia. Uniquely, BRACED also has a Knowledge Manager consortium.

The Knowledge Manager consortium is led by the Overseas Development Institute and includes the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, ENDA Energie, ITAD, Thompson Reuters Foundation and the University of Nairobi.

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The BRACED Knowledge Manager generates evidence and learning on resilience and adaptation in partnership with the BRACED projects and the wider resilience community. It gathers robust evidence of what works to strengthen resilience to climate extremes and disasters, and initiates and supports processes to ensure that evidence is put into use in policy and programmes. The Knowledge Manager also fosters partnerships to amplify the impact of new evidence and learning, in order to significantly improve levels of resilience in poor and vulnerable countries and communities around the world.

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